

CLEONICE, (5

PRINCESS of BITHYNIA:

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

JOHN HOOLE.

DUBLIN:

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MDCCLXIV.



P R O L O G U E.

Written by THOMAS VAUGHAN, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

TELL me, ye Gods, ye arbiters of wit,
Who rule the heavens, or who lead the pit,
[addressing the gallery and pit.

Whence comes it, in an age refin'd by taste
By science polish'd, and by judgement chaste,
We see the Muse, in dignity sublime,
Led on by prologue, ape-ing pantomime;
Whose sportive fancy, and whose comic skill,
All must applaud—where Roscius guides the quill;
Yet when Melpomene in grief appears,
Her suffering virtue bath'd in sorrow's tears,
From Tyrant laws, or jealous love oppress'd,
Swelling with silence in her tortur'd breast.
How can the heart her genial impulse shew,
Feel as she feels, or weep another's woe;
When gay Thalia has so late possess'd
The laughing transports of the human breast?
Let each her province keep, let jocund mirth
To Epilogue alone give happy birth;
Ease the struck soul from ev'ry anxious fear,
And wipe from beauty's cheek the silent tear.

Twice Metastasio's wings have borne our Bayes,
And safely brought him o'er the critic seas;
Fir'd with success, he dares this awful night,
Cheer'd by your smiles to take a bolder flight;
Nor longer stoop beneath a foreign shade,
Like Dian shining from a borrow'd aid;
But comes impregnate with Icarian pride,
To stretch his pinnions, and forsake his guide;
Yet doubtful flies, lest vapours damp his force,
And one black cloud should stop his airy course,
To awful heights his proud ambition soars,
And the dread regions of applause explores;

P R O L O G U E

No sun he fears—but courts its warmest ray
 'Tis yours to raise—or sink him in the sea.

Let Candour then proceed to try the cause,
 That Magna Charta of dramatic laws!

P R O L O G U E.

Written by a Friend, to have been spoken in the
 character of the Tragic Muse.

Designed for Mrs. BARRY.

JUDGES of Genius! from whose hands a bard
 This night awaits the laurel of reward!

To you, the Tragic Muse, in Britain's name,
 Comes to announce the merits of his claim.

'Tis I have led him timorous to this field,
 And bade him dare his country's guantlet wield;

Bade him aspire to vault her fiery breed,
 Nor humbly stoop to mount the manag'd steed.

Long had I seen his patient merit toil,
 In culling chaplets from a foreign soil;

Whilst, here, transplanted by his skilful hand,
 Italia's honours bloom'd in Albion's land.

Long had I mark'd, as such exotic boughs
 Content he wove to veil his modest brows,

A spirit that in paths untrod before
 Might snatch the nobler foliage of this shore.

Pleas'd with the hopes, that I had now descry'd
 A future son, from whom the buskin's pride

To this my favourite Isle, again might rise;
 I touch'd his ear, and pointed out the prize.

"Wither my honours in this clime (I said)

"Buds here no bounteous leaf to deck thy head?

"Are these once fostering skies so over-cast,

"That Genius dares not brave th' inclement blast?

"Come, let me lead thee, where my sons of yore

"In Fancy's fields amass'd their laureate store;

"With

P R O L O G U E.

" *With active powers, aloft, bestrode the clouds*
 " *Inspir'd by kind acclaims of shouting crowds.*
 " *Turn thee, where Shakespear wav'd the mystic rod,*
 " *And saw a new creation wait his nod.*
 " *Behold where Terror, with eccentric stride,*
 " *Bursts, like a torrent from the mountain's side !*
 " *Behold where gentle pity heaves the sigh,*
 " *Sluicing the fruitful conduit of the eye !*
 " *See love at whose approach, the airy Wiles*
 " *Of Mirth and Freedom, or the jocund Smiles*
 " *Of sweet content, dispers'd in wild affright,*
 " *Mount on their silken wings and take their flight.*
 " *See Jealousy his hideous form uprear,*
 " *Time the quick brand, and shake the vengeful spear :*
 " *While, close behind, fell Anguish and Disdain*
 " *Stalk sullen by, and swell his gloomy train.*
 " *Mark where Despair points to some distant ground,*
 " *On blasted yews, where Night-birds shriek around,*
 " *Where yawning Tombs add horror to the night,*
 " *And Meteors flash their momentary light.*
 " *Here mark thyself, what various objects rise,*
 " *Nor trust the medium of another's eyes.*

I spoke—and Genius strait began to spread
 His ready Plumage, and my voice obey'd,
 Adventurous, thence he dares this night aspire
 To stamp the vivid scene with native fire.
 'Tis yours, ye Britons, then, with kind applause,
 To fan the flame I kindled in your cause :
 Nor be it said, when on your mercy thrown,
 You foster every spark, but what's your own.
 From your dread sentence, crown'd with laurels won,
 I ardently expect to greet a Son :
 The Palm I have deposited with you,
 And trust your hearts to give it where 'tis due.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

ARTABASUS, *King of Pontus*, Mr. BARRY.
PHARNACES, { *his son, under the* } Mr. LEWIS.
 { *name of Arsetes,* }
LYCOMEDES, *King of Bithynia*, Mr. BENSLEY.
ORONTES, { *Prince of the blood* } Mr. LEE.
 { *of Bithynia,* }
TERAMENES, *General of Bithynia*, Mr. HULL.
AGENOR, *Friend to Pharnaces*, Mr. WHITEFIELD.
ZOPYRUS, *Friend to Orontes*, Mr. L'ESTRANGE.
Officer, Mr. THOMPSON.

W O M E N.

CLEONICE, *Daughter to Lycomedes*, Mrs. HARTLEY.
ARSINOE, *Daughter to Teramenes*, Miss DAVES.

Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, *a city on the frontiers of Bithynia, and the country adjacent.*



C L E

CLEONICE:

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE, *a gallery.*

TERAMENES, AGENOR.

TERAMENES.

AGENOR, still Bithynia must retain
The sword unsheath'd, and still remov'd afar,
Shall Peace, in vain desir'd, mock every hope,
Of dear domestic happiness—the leagues
Of factious princes, whose associate force
Has vex'd this bleeding land, now yield indeed
To Lycomedes' arms, or rather shrink
Before the genius of your noble friend.

Agén. Arsetes, bred in distant realms, and long
A wanderer o'er the face of earth, must hail
The hour that led his steps to tread your soil,
And gave him Teramenes for his friend.

Tera. Tho' now the rage of civil strife is past,
Full well thou know'st, to-morrow's sun declin'd,
His next returning beam lights up the day
That ends the truce with Pontus, and demands
Our strongest force to meet a mightier foe,
In Artabasus.

Agén. Five returning suns
Have chang'd your vernal groves, since as the breath
Of Fame declares, your armies met and fought
On Hippia's banks, what time your martial powers
(Forgive me, if report mislead my tongue,)
Bow'd to a foreign standard.

Tera. Lycomedes,
Whose thirst of glory in his vigorous life
Compell'd the neighbouring states to bend beneath
Bithynia's yoke; when creeping time had clogg'd

The

The vital springs, and kept his age from scenes,
 Of active valour, by his generals still
 Maintain'd the field, and thro' the nations spread
 His martial terrors, till that fatal day,
 When Hippias, down his current, dy'd with blood,
 The frequent corse and glittering ensign bore:
 Then, midst the slaughter, fell a sacrifice
 To iron war, our king's lamented son;
 A youth, the early darling of his fire,
 The soldier's hope, and nursling of the field.

Agen. Oft have I heard Polemon's name, whose brave
 Unpractis'd arm encounter'd Artabasus,
 And from his sword receiv'd a glorious death.

Tera. But tho' the time's necessity compell'd
 Bithynia to the truce, still, still the thought
 Of his Polemon rankled in the bosom
 Of our afflicted monarch, still the hope,
 Tho' distant hope of vengeance, glow'd within,
 And fed eternal hatred in his soul.

While now to Pontus' bounds, his army spreads
 Its conquering legions, he forgoes the state
 Of Nicomedias' palace, to reside
 Amidst this city, whose opposing bulwarks
 Rise on the kingdom's edge, and dare the foe.

Agen. Fame speaks your rival great, and gives the
 praise

Of might and wisdom to the king of Pontus;
 And more, 'tis said, his son, amidst the files
 Of Rome's immortal legions, distant far
 From Pontus, learns the rugged trade of war,
 And gathers laurels in his blooming age,
 That veterans view with envy: his return
 Gives earnest of new triumphs.

Tera. Let him come;
 Would yet Arfetes aid Bithynia's cause
 His sword with brave Orontes join'd, whose hand
 Must sway the scepter of Bithynia's realm,
 Might fix th' unsteady wing of victory
 To Lycomedes' bands.

Agen. Orontes' valour
 Your sovereign deems to merit Cleonice,
 Whose piety forsakes the pomp of courts,
 The splendid ease of female life, to attend

A father's

A father's steps, amidst the clang of war.
 But for Arfetes, thou rememberest well
 When first he join'd to thine his social arms,
 He pledg'd his faith for five returning moons
 To abide your welcome guest, and now the tenth
 Wanes in her silver orb.

Tera.

What says Agenor ?

My mind, tho' loth, recalls each circumstance.
 But still I hop'd Arfetes might be won
 To breathe our friendly air, still mix'd among
 Bithynia's warlike sons, now hovering o'er
 The verge of hostile Pontus, when the time
 And place concurr'd to pour with sudden inroad
 The storm of conquest on our hated foe,
 To avenge a form, a worth so like his own—
 —But see, he comes—

Enter ARSETES.

Belov'd Arfetes, welcome !

Youth, at thy presence, buds with bloom renew'd,
 Such as I was, when, on Arabia's sands,
 I crush'd the wandering robbers of the desert.

Arse. My lord, too partial friendship ever finds
 New praise for your Arfetes ; if I claim
 Of merit aught, here Heaven receive my thanks,
 That bade me wield the sword for Lycomedes.

Tera. And yet Arfetes now methinks forgets
 To prize our country's honours ; while the bond
 Of friendship holds no more his changing heart ;
 That heart, which once I press'd with transport here,
 Which seem'd with mutual transport to receive
 The love I proffer'd, when my bosom glow'd
 With warmth of gratitude to him, whose arm
 Snatch'd Teramenes from impending death,
 As fierce Lysippus aim'd the threatening blade
 At my defenceless head, when you rush'd in,
 (Till then unknown) and sav'd me from the foe.

Arse. 'Twas sure some happy star, that led my steps
 At that blest moment—if I sav'd the life
 Of Teramenes, I preserv'd indeed
 A faithful counsellor for Lycomedes,
 An army's chief, but for myself a friend.

Tera. And wilt thou, my Arfetes, now forsake

The

The bands, that late pursued the glorious task
 Of conquest, taught by thee—now when the great,
 Th' important moment comes, on which depends
 Our monarch's fame, our vengeance—led by thee
 And brave Orontes, we have stemm'd the tide
 Of inbred tumult: every rebel head
 Now lies subdued, and flush'd with great success,
 Our soldiers now demand, with loud acclaim,
 To pour their fury o'er yon hostile bounds,
 Beneath Arsetes and Orontes.

Arse.

Heaven

Be witness here, compulsive honour long
 Has challeng'd my departure—yet, till now
 I wav'd obedience to the frequent calls
 Of duty; but the flame of civil broils
 At length subsiding thro' your troubled state,
 I must (forgive me, chief, forgive me, friend,)
 Yield to the powerful voice, and quit Bithynia.
 By every toil my sword has known in battle,
 But most the toils I shar'd with Teramenes,
 Unwilling and compell'd, I leave your clime,
 And quit a country dearer than my own.

Tera. Farewell, Arsetes; think that Teramenes
 Feels from his inmost soul the fix'd resolve
 Of him, whom once he fondly deem'd by fortune,
 From all mankind selected for his friend.
 I'll seek the king—no less will he regret
 Arsetes' loss, whose presence might insure
 His wish'd revenge, and fix his kingdoms glory. [*Exit.*]

ARSETES, AGENOR.

Agen. Why droops Arsetes? O! discover all
 Thy secret grief and let Agenor share it.

Arse. Indeed thou dost—my every thought is thine,
 My other self, my bosom's counsellor!
 What needs there more to rend my heart, to fill
 My tortur'd soul, while loitering here I wrong
 My native soil, the voice of filial duty
 Chides my delay, yet Love, the powerful God
 Reigns in my breast, and mocks each settled purpose:
 Come, my Agenor, with thy friendly aid
 Confirm my thoughts, and teach me yet to tread,
 Yet to resume the path my feet have left;

To

To quit the land, where all my joys are center'd,
To tear myself from love and Cleonice——

——O! never!——never——

Agen.

Yet again reflect,

Think who you are, to what has Heaven reserv'd
Your virtues—Shall a kingdom's heir——

Arse.

Go on——

'Tis honest chiding—Shall a kingdom's heir,
(Thus would'st thou say) on whom th' expecting eyes
Of thousands look for happiness, on whom
A father fixes every dearest hope
To see himself renew'd to distant times,
Shall he, forgetting all the claims of glory,
Forgetting all the ties of filial duty,
Defraud his longing people of their prince,
And from his fire with-hold a darling son?
Say—shall Bithynia's hostile lands detain,
From Artabasus' sight his loved Pharnaces?
O! no—Agenor—thou hast fir'd my soul;
My father!—yes, I will embrace the knees
Of him, whose love reproaches my delay.
Yet never, Cleonice, shall this breast
Forget its wonted flame:—Is it a crime
To adore the sum of all her sex's graces,
Tho' wayward chance has plac'd the hopeless bar
Of lineal enmity between our loves?

Agen. And yet, my prince; the indulgent hand of
fate,

Perchance may weave your future web of life
With threads of brighter dye; even love itself
May find a way to clear the gloomy prospect:
Discord perhaps may once again extinguish
Her hated torch that fires the rival nations,
And Cleonice be the bond of peace:
Too long, already, strangers have we lived,
Alien from friends and home: tho' Artabasus
Sent you beneath my father's guardian care,
To learn hard lessons in the school of glory,
Yet sure the parent suffer'd in that absence,
Which, as a king, his virtue deem'd would raise
Your fame, and fit you for a people's weal.

Arse. Yes, my Agenor, oft his tenderest greetings
Have warn'd me to return, when circling time

Had

Had brought the period fix'd for my departure;
Or when the pause of arms, or honour's duty
Permitted me to quit the host of Rome.

Agen. And yet—my prince—

Arse. And yet—too true, Agenor,
I feel each just reproach—the land indeed
I left, and journey'd o'er a length of soil,
When fate (for sure 'twas more than common fortune)
Prompted my steps to tread Bithynia's realm,
Where Lycomedes wag'd intestine war
With rebel arms.

Agen. Thy generous valour then,
Warm'd by the common cause of kings, to assert
A prince's rights, forgot thy country's foe.

Arse. Full well thou know'st I vow'd to every God,
By all the solemn ties that bind mankind,
Ne'er to reveal, while in this hostile land
My country or my birth; this, urg'd by thee,
I swore, when first I told thee my design,
To gaze on Cleonice's wondrous charms:

Agen. Nor vain the caution—think, O think, how far
It yet imports to keep the mighty secret:
Alas! my friend, I tremble, had your father
Been conscious whither fortune led the steps
Of his Pharnaces; could he know the land
Of Lycomedes now detains his son—
Th'idea starts a thousand fears: should now
Some dreadful chance betray you to the foe;
I shudder at the thought—then let us hence
And to the longing troops of Pontus give
A blooming herd, promis'd oft in vain:
Then let us hasten—by my father's shade
I now adjure you—for Pharnaces once
Rever'd his Tiridates—

Arse. Witness Heaven
How dear I held him!—Artabazus only
Could claim a nearer duty o'er my heart,
The guide, the great example of my youth!
Methinks I now recall the fatal day
That snatch'd him from us—O my lov'd Agenor!
The scene is present to my eyes—I see
The battle rang'd, when to my ardent gaze

His

A T R A G E D Y.

3

His hand experienc'd pointed out the files
Of rigid war, and taught me where to drive
The thunder of the field; when Heaven so will'd,
A distant arrow sent with deadly aim,
Pierc'd his brave breast——

Agénor. Then midst the distant fight,
It was not given Agénor's hand to close,
A dying parent's eyes——

Arse. These arms receiv'd
The venerable chief——“Take, take,” (he cry'd)
“This last embrace—still let the dear remembrance
“Of Tiridates' counsels move his prince,
“And, for my sake, be kind to my Agénor.”
He could no more, but left in thee his pledge
Of truth and amity—since which my soul
Has held thee ever partner of her fame,
Her better-half, her other Tiridates! [Embrace.

Agénor. I am indeed thy Tiridates—yes,
My father, from thy seats of bliss and peace,
See, how thy prince rewards thy loyal faith,
And, in his love, supplies a parent's loss——
And yet, forgive me, prince, thy words awake
Remembrance of that day for ever mourn'd!——
—My father——

Arse. Go, Agénor, since my last
Resolves are fix'd—provide what'er requires
To quit this court—to quit my Cleonice,
Tho' death is in the thought!—thy pitey
Reproaches mine—ere yet the mounting sun
Whose early ray now gilds the face of morn,
Attain his mid-day feat, the camp of Pontus
Shall see Pharnaces and Agénor. (Exit Agénor.)

Arse. (alone.) Yet
Be still, my beating heart—O Cleonice!
I feel her now—Instruct me every God
In soothing speech—O! teach my lips to breathe
In gentlest sounds the fatal word—farewell.

——Orontes here!—and is not this the blest
The destin'd husband of my Cleonice——

I shall relapse—for if I think—distraction
Ensues, and fame and peace are lost for ever! [Exit.

B

Enter

His

Enter ORONTES.

Oron. Sure 'twas Arsetes! that malignant planet,
That thwarts my course, whene'er my fiery soul
Would, eagle-wing'd, stretch her aspiring flight,
He soars above me still—Have I not worn
The mask of loyal faith, smooth'd o'er the dark
The sullen brow of deep design, with smiles
My heart confess'd not?—What have I not done,
For thee, Ambition!—Let not pale remembrance
Review the past, or paint a scene to stagger
The sickly resolution—deeds long done,
That sleep secure from every mortal ken,
Are but as shadows in the coward eye
Of conscience—Hence!—Orontes' soul disdains
The phantoms of remorse.—

Enter ZOPYRUS.

Now, my Zopyrus—

Speak; hast thou aught that claims my ear?

Zop.

I learn

That the young stranger, who so deeply witch'd
The madding multitude, prepares this day
To leave Bithynia's court.

Oron.

It cannot be—

Arsetes!—speak—what at this fated time,
When war again unfolds his brazen portals,
And Pontus brings to view its crested thousands,
A tempting prospect yet untry'd, to prove
His sword—It cannot be!

Zop.

This hour Agenor

Declar'd Arseses' purpose.

Oron.

Speed it, gods!

Come near, Zopyrus, to thy faithful ear
I've oft disclos'd the secrets of my heart,
Where Love, but most Ambition holds his sway.
This stranger is my bane—I shrink beneath
His better Genius—even the field that once
Crown'd this good sword with honours, yields me now
But wither'd laurels, which his brow disdains;
While the blind herd on him, with full-mouth'd clamour,
Lavish their shouts.

Zop.

Yet fortune has secur'd

Your brightest hopes—has not our king declar'd

Orontes,

Orontes, next by birth, ascends the throne?
 Have not the assembled states confirm'd the right
 Of just succession? hastening on the steep
 Of downward life, our king, though high in spirit,
 Blazing with wasting light, that soon must fail,
 Shall sudden sink in night, and leave to thee
 A glorious rising to imperial greatness!
 Fair Cleonice too shall bless your bed,
 And with her beauty smooth the toils of empire.

Oron. 'Tis true, the charms of Cleonice well
 Might claim the tongue of rapture—yet, Zopyrus,
 While great Ambition's sun lights up my flame,
 The star of Love looks sickly at his beams.

Zop. What more can crown your wish, when Happiness,
 In all your soul aspires to, soon shall open
 Her welcome arms—Mean-time the king, my lord,
 Esteems, and holds you high above the rank
 Of Nicomedia's nobles.

Oron. True, Zopyrus;
 Spite of the tardy warmth of cautious age
 I've work'd me deep in Lycomedes' soul,
 By more than common zeal to avenge his son.
 But home-bred faction, spreading thro' the land,
 Compell'd us to the hated truce with Pontus:
 Till now, nine moons elaps'd, this upstart chief
 Stept in to bear away the prize of arms
 Due to my elder sword; while Teramenes
 With partial eye beheld his every deed,
 And idoliz'd the work himself had rais'd.

Zop. Yet common rumour speaks that friendship holds
 In strongest bands Orontes and Arsites.

Oron. Even so, my friend—and policy demands
 That he, who runs the mingled race of life,
 Should learn to veil himself, and oft appear
 The thing he is not——

Zop. Should propitious Fortune
 Remove your rival hence——

Oron. If this report
 Be true, the dark eclipse that late has frown'd,
 No more, my friend, shall intercept my fame;
 The war's great field, at this auspicious time

Begun, shall not enrich a stranger's hand,
But fall the harvest of Orontes' sword. [Exeunt.

A C T II.

SCENE, *A garden, with palm-trees, olives, and other Eastern plants.*

CLEONICE, alone.

A LAST it will not be! and fond remembrance
In vain recalls the past—where, where is now
That reason's boast, which o'er creation lifts
The pride of man, when sickle as the gale
That sweeps the blossom from the bough, our passions
Veer with each hour, and shake our best resolves?
How is my bosom chang'd!—no longer now,
From my example, mothers teach the young
And tender maid, who dreads each swelling wave
That heaves but gently o'er the stream of life,
To rise superior to her sex's weakness!—

Enter ARSINOE.

Arsi. Friend of my life, whose partial choice has given
Arsinoë long the privilege to pass
The ceremonious bounds, which birth and title
Had plac'd between us, wherefore art thou chang'd
From her that lov'd, and lov'd but her Arsinoë?

Cleo. Still art thou here the partner of my heart;
Then wherefore this reproach? and why complain
Of change that never yet this breast has known?
We were two plants that grew in friendship's soil,
And promis'd fruits of never-dying love.

Arsi. Then every care that Cleonice knew
Arsinoë too has shar'd—but late I've mark'd
That Cleonice, different from herself,
Shuns even Arsinoë's presence, even seeks
The lone recess, and brooding o'er her thoughts,
Nurses some hidden grief—soon war again
Shall loose its rage—perhaps the threatening danger
Alarms your fear.

Cleo. Thou know'st that I alone
Remain'd the comfort of a father's age,
When fate, that tore Polemon from the hope

Of

Of his Bithynia, from a husband's arms
 A hapless consort sever'd, thou remember'st,
 My mother, sad Arete, bow'd with grief,
 Soon mix'd her ashes with the son's she mourn'd;
 Then left, in early youth, my converse oft
 Sooth'd a fond parent's pangs, when recollection
 Rais'd up the form of blessings lost for ever!
 While, as I grew, paternal fondness saw
 With partial eye his Cleonice's mind
 Expand beyond her sex: hence not alone,
 The soft, the winning talents, that to life
 Give female polish, but the greater arts
 Ennobling man were taught my ripening age.
 But, o'er the rest, my fire, whose bosom glow'd
 T'avenge his son, enur'd my thoughts to cherish
 Deep hatred of the foe by whom he fell.

Arf. Hatred and vengeance ill agree, my friend,
 With tender grief like thine—estrang'd from all
 Thy wonted temper, solitude bespeaks
 Far other change—Then seek not to deceive
 The searching eye of friendship.

Cleo. Alas! Arsinœ,
 I feel the woman here——thou said'st but now
 That war again must soon unloose its rage;
 Is there no cause for fear? whate'er the tongue
 Of stoic fortitude may boast, the mind,
 The generous mind that owns life's dearest ties,
 Will nourish feelings pride disdains to own.

Arf. Revolve our present state, our country's sword,
 Now us'd to victory gives high expectance
 Of future triumphs, white for you, my friend,
 If love, if grandeur charm, Bithynia's throne
 Shall raise you high, and Hymen light his torch
 At Cupid's flame——Is not the first of men,
 The first of heroes, yours? Yes, Cleonice,
 Each anxious doubt shall fleet like morning mist,
 And all be lost in your Orontes' arms.

Cleo. Orontes' arms!——O Heaven! what have I said!
 By every tie of love——But whither——whither
 Now rove my thoughts!——Leave me, leave me, my
 Arsinœ,
 To brood in secret o'er my treasur'd sorrows.

Arfi. Scarce from her teeth fair crescent has the moon
Silver'd night's fleecy robe, since I've beheld,
Tho' silent, I've beheld thy alter'd mien;
Methinks ere since the day, when midst the ranks
Of rebel arms my father scap'd with life,
Sav'd by the gallant aid of brave Arsetes—
Ha! thou art pale—and now the mantling blood
Returns once more—What can this mean?—My heart
Has caught the alarm, and, Oh! my soul forebodes
Distress and anguish to my hopeless love. (*aside*)

Cleo. It must be so—hence, every vain respect
I can no more dissemble—Hear, Arsinde,
Hear then and pity Cleonice's weakness,
While Lycomedes with a monarch's care,
Plans future schemes of greatness—Cleonice,
Lost to herself, her rank, her sex's glory,
Doats on the merits of a youth unknown.

Arfi. Orontes then—

Cleo. Orontes—name him not—
I own his worth—I own the sacred rights
A king and father claim—but I must own,
Tho' while I speak, confusion fills my soul,
Arsetes bears down all; and tho' the pride
Of fortune rais'd me high above his hopes,
A pleader here, which nothing could withstand,
By looks, by deeds, by all that can ennoble
The pride of youthful manhood, had prepar'd
My easy bosom to receive the guest,
That now, sole tyrant, reigns my bosom's lord.

Arfi. Then am I lost indeed! (*aside*)

Cleo. Go, my Arsinde,
And learn if aught is rumour'd that pertains
To my Arsetes:—soon this favour'd hero
Will leave Bithynia's court—but still remember
Veil'd in thy faithful breast to keep my secret
To thee I trust my life, my fame, my all! (*Exit Arsinde*)

Cleo. [*alone.*] Lost and bewild'ring still I rove life's
Distressful labyrinth—Why, Cleonice,
Why didst thou leave the shore of calm indifference,
To launch upon the dangerous sea of love?

Enter LYCOMEDES, and TERAMENES

Lyco. This day, my Cleonice, surely dawns
With

With happiest omens—He, whose valiant arm,
Join'd with Orontes, quell'd our rebel sons ;
To whom the public voice gave every suffrage
Of grateful tribute, threaten'd to forsake
Our realm, and bear to other climes his sword :
But Teramenes, who with counsel sage
For ever watches o'er his country's weal,
Has found the happy means to fix him here,
To graft his virtues on Bithynia's stock,
Blest earnest of revenge !

Cleo. What means my father ? *(aside.*
My lord, the duty Cleonice owes
Her country's welfare, and her father's honour,
Demands my thanks for every aid that Heaven
Gives to Bithynia's strength—and sure, Arfetes
Stands first in martial praise—But say, my father,
What happy means has Teramenes found
To fix him yours ?

Lyc. Such means as oft have dealt
Destruction on mankind : what oft has drawn
The sword of violence, may now secure
A nation's fame and vengeance—Yes, whate'er
Arfetes' race or country, beauty's charms
Insure his future service.—Fair Arsinœ,
Thy virtuous friend, shall bind her native land
In grateful thanks for such a hero's valour.
Our friend, our Teramenes, joins to his
Arsinœ's hand, and gives, in such a son,
A great ally in Lycomedes' cause.
Led by Orontes' and Arfetes' valour,
What may Bithynia's squadrons not atchieve ?

Cleo. *(aside.)* Support me, Heaven ! *[to Ter.]*—Sir,
I confess the virtues
Of my Arsinœ, and her beauty's charms :
Permit me yet to ask you, if Arfetes
Has e'er reveal'd—Perhaps some distant fair,
Whose love and beauty had possess'd his soul,
Impels him to forsake Bithynia's court.

Ter. No, princess—if this judgment, not unskill'd
In human kind, can read the thoughts of men,
He loves Arsinœ : late have I observ'd
His bosom labouring with the stifled passion,

Of

Of recent birth ; and well I know my daughter
Owns, with a virgin blush, Arsetes' virtues :
Nor could a youth, whose fortune only rests
In his own merits and his sword, refuse
That hand which Nicomedes's noblest peers
With transport would receive.

Lyc. Why droops my daughter ?
Still cherish hope ; a train of better days
Succeeds, where vengeance brightens up the prospect.
My age's darling ! 'tis for thee my soul
Still labours, tho' declining years would fain
Woo me to shades of peace—to raise thee high,
With thy Orontes, and avenge my boy,
I scorn repose—nor will I rest till these
Old eyes behold in chains or breathless stretch'd
The cruel foe by whom Polemon fell !
Come, Teramenes, let us seek Arsetes,
Then once again renew our vows to pour
The war's whole rage on Artabafus' head.

[*Exeunt Lyc. and Ter.*]

Cleo. [alone.] It is enough—misfortune now has spent
Her utmost shafts—and I defy the future !
O Cleonice ! has thy struggling bosom
For this so long contended ? O when pride
Of inborn dignity, when sense of fame,
And every duty to a father, urg'd
My soul to combat love—how have the words
Of perfidy ensnar'd my easy heart !
Deceiv'd—rejected—wedded to Arsinoë !
But hence !—ayaunt !—I will—I would forget
The perjurd, yet the once belov'd Arsetes !
But see !—the traitor comes !—O Heaven ! away
With woman's weakness—meet him as befits
A princess slighted and her love betray'd !

Enter ARSETES.

Arse. While thus the fairest of her sex withdraws
To solitude and sadness, thuns the gaze
Of admiration, let Arsetes yet
Intrude on Cleonice's lonely hours
Ere cruel fate compels—

Cleo. My lord, forbear—
This needed not—a hero's towering soul
Soars high above the weakness of the lover :

Since

Since thou wilt part, it is not Cleonice
 Can here detain Arfetes—other charms—
 But I forget myself—excuse me, Sir—
 Whate'er your aims—let not my presence damp
 The glorious fortune love and fate prepare—
 And think not e'er awaken'd from her dream
 Of fond credulity, that Cleonice
 Will cloud your joys, or stop your path to greatness. [*Exit.*]

Arse. [*alone.*] Where am I? sure I dream—my
 every sense
 Is lost in wild amazement—

Enter AGENOR.

Agen. All is ready,
 And nothing now remains but that we quit
 Bithynia's court for Artabazus' camp—
 What mean those looks of sorrow, wherefore heaves
 Your swelling breast, while clouded with despair
 Your eyes, in silent pause, reproach the Gods?

Arse. Alas! what shall I say—could'st thou believe it,
 Agenor? she for whom my soul had near
 Forgot a kingdom's fame, a father's love,
 Each nice respect of honour, made my name
 To future times the scorn of every tongue,
 That fathers to their sons might point the example,
 And bid them fear to fall as fell Pharnaces!
 Even she, my friend, has now with cruel scorn,
 Repaid my love—

Agen. O Sir, forgive Agenor;
 But sure in pity fate concurs even here
 To hasten your resolves—whate'er the cause
 Of Cleonice's anger, every moment
 Is wing'd with peril—think what foes conspire
 Against your father's peace, his life and fame.

Arse. No more, no more, Agenor—best of friends,
 In thee thy father Tiridates speaks.
 Pharnaces! still thou shalt retrieve thy glory;
 Burst from the veil of dark obscurity,
 And blaze in virtue's beam—But yet, Agenor!
 O yet indulge a heart that sinks beneath
 Accumulated anguish—can I leave
 My Cleonice thus—alas! who knows
 How soon, by rash resentment urg'd, her hand

How

May to Orontes yield her plighted faith !
While absent hence Pharnaces.

Agén. Wilt thou then,
Wilt thou then linger here, unmindful still
Of fame and Artabafus ?

Arfe. No—this night,
Be witness, every power ! we leave the court—
This only day indulge a lover's fondness !
The care be thine that Artabafus soon
Receive this fignet, whith the welcome news
That his Pharnaces, his expected fon,
Will join, ere yet they reach the bounds of Pontus,
His native bands,—there, kneeling at his feet,
Implore forgiveness—in this interval
Of fate and love, these lips fhall once again
Affail with every soothing eloquence
The cruel Cleonice ; then, Agenor,
To Artabafus will I open all
My fecret heart—perhaps fome future day
(O busy hope !) may give me undisguis'd
To plead my caufe before her, when my fighs
Shall in her breaft revive the tender flame,
And love with endless rapture crown Pharnaces !

[Exeunt feverally.]

SCENE a gallery.

Enter LYCOMEDES and TERAMENES.

Lyc. How ftand the fouldiers' hopes, my Teramenes ?
What fpirit breathes among their ranks, to give
A prefage of the war ?

Tera. The troops on fire,
Demand alone Orontes and Arfetes ;
With loud reproach they execrate the foe,
And hail with joy the near expiring truce.

Lyc. Yes, Teramenes—civil Difcord now,
That fheaths her fword, has left Revenge to rear
Her dreadful banner—Nemefis has heard
Our folemn vows againft exulting Pontus.
No more Polemon's ghofthall haunt my dreams ;
Arfetes and Orontes fhall extend
My name to lateft times ; the glorious love
Of empire and of arms, that fir'd my youth,
Shall warm my frozen age—too long compell'd

I fmo-

I smother'd in my breast the flame of hatred ;
 But when my soul forgets thy loss, Polemon,
 Disgrace and ruin o'er these silver locks
 Shed their black influence !—Orontes, welcome ;
 What hear'st thou of the foe ?

Enter ORONTES.

Orom. Not unprepar'd,
 The king of Pontus, from Heraclea's walls,
 Has drawn the choicest sons of valour forth,
 That lie encamp'd beside Parthenius' stream.

Tera. 'Tis said, they wait the arrival of Pharnaces,
 (The kingdom's hope) whom Artabafus sent,
 What time Bithynia sign'd the truce with Pontus,
 To distant Rome to train his youth in arms ;
 And Fame, with loudest tongue, proclaims his praise.

Lycos. A stripling when he left his father's court ?

Tera. He was ; and now scarce twenty suns have
 ripened

Our fruitful years, since Artabafus gain'd
 By him a parent's name.——

Lycos. Such as he is——

O, scorpion memory ! such perhaps had been
 Bithynia's heir and Lycomedes' son !
 O, Teramenes ! O, Orontes ! pity
 A father's feelings—Thou, Orontes, saw'st
 My hapless boy—thy pious arms embrac'd
 My lost Polemon, as life's gushing stream
 Sprinkled his budding laurels—where was then
 A father's vengeful sword, while to his tent
 You bore him pale and senseless, distant far,
 Detain'd by coward age, these ears receiv'd
 The dreadful tidings, when his frantic mother
 Ended her wretched being—Powerful Jove !
 Shed from thy bitter urn the dregs of anguish
 On my poor span of life, withhold each comfort
 Which creeping years, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, claim,
 If I forgive the cruel hand that cropt
 This blooming plant, which else had flourish'd now,
 And shelter'd with his shade my wasting age !

Orom. Soon shall we lead th' embattled squadrons forth
 On Artabafus—should this boasted son
 Return, tho' conquest plum'd, he comes perhaps
 A fated victim——

Lycos.

Lyco. O! that thought, Orontes,
 Gives vigour to my neryes!—Ye powers of vengeance!
 Hear, hear a father's voice, and thro' his son,
 Reach Artabafus' heart, that after years
 Of tedious expectation, now at length
 Return'd and scarcely welcom'd, he may fall
 A dreadful sacrifice—then thro' the sense,
 The thrilling sense of fond parental love,
 By his Pharnaces let him know the pangs
 Of Lycomedes, when Polemon fell! [Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE, a private apartment.

Enter CLEONICE and ARSINOE.

CLEONICE.

TALK not of comfort—'tis in vain. Arsinœ;
 Arfetes leaves us—my relentless scorn,
 Impell'd by frantic jealousy, the madness
 Of woman's love, drives from Bithynia's court
 The first of warriors: his right hand, that still
 Held Victory captive, now to happier realms
 Shall bear his fortune and his fame—the fun
 That rises on the war, shall see our troops
 Pale and dismay'd for their Arfetes lost.
 Who knows the event?—the same declining fun
 May blush upon Bithynia's shame, and gild
 With favouring rays the tent of Artabafus,
 May smile upon his arms; while Lycomedes
 Curses each day that wider spreads his shame.

Arfi. Alas! my friend, your warmth of temper frames
 The gloomiest prospects of imagin'd terror—
 Tho' Fortune now may frown—

Cleo. Thee too, Arsinœ,
 Thee have I wrong'd—forgive thy Cleonice—
 Art thou to blame, if, fram'd for gentlest passions,
 Thy breast, the seat of innocence and love,
 Confest the manly beauties of Arfetes,
 Not bound by cruel ties of fame or duty?
 Rouze, rouse, my feeble virtue—yes, I feel
 New strength, and should Arfetes yet remain—
 I think, Arsinœ—Heaven, support the thought!
 I think,—I could resolve to yield him to thee—
 But see, thy father— [Enter

A TRAGEDY.

25

Enter Teramenes.

Ter. All the hopes we form'd
To keep Arsetes here, dissolve in air :
Thus oft, presumptuous man too fondly grasps
Ideal good : the hero, whom we deem'd
Secur'd by every tie, declines the hand
By Hymen given, endow'd with wealth and honours ;
While candor blushes on his modest cheek,
He owns Arsinö's virtues, owns the fate
That now forbids him to receive her love,
Or longer to remain Bithynia's guest.

Cleo. Still art thou true, Arsetes !

Ter. My Arsinö,
Why heaves thy bosom ?—Still our guardian Gods
We trust will smile.

Arf. My lord, Arsinö stands
Prepar'd for all—be witness, Heaven ! how oft
I check'd each flattering hope : forgive, my father,
The involuntary sigh ! perhaps the last
The fruitless effort of expiring passion !

Ter. Call up the thoughts that suit thy sex and rank :
Time shall, with lenient hand, relieve thy anguish,
Thy princess, with the gracious warmth of friendship
Shall shed the balm of comfort in thy wounds ;
—Still art thou sad ?—permit me, Cleonice,
Awhile retir'd with dear paternal counsels,
To arm her tender breast, that peace again
May chase despair and ease an anxious father.

[Exit with Arsinö.]

Cle. alone. Tho' my heart joys to find Arsetes true,
Still am I wretched—yet again methinks,
Fain would I once again behold that face
Where love, where faith !—but O ! 'tis madness all !
Doom'd to Orontes, when the lonely hour
Invites to shades of sorrow, tyrant duty
Makes even my grief a crime—but let me still,
Let me once more, while yet without reproach
I may indulge the sight, behold Arsetes,
Take the last sad adieu—and like a wretch
That shivers on the precipice of fate,
Enjoy the parting glimpse of peace and happiness,
Then sink at once to misery and Orontes.

[Exit.]
SCENE,

C

S C E N E, *a ball.**Enter Lycomedes, Teramenes, and Orontes.*

Lyc. The Gods have heard our vows, my Teramenes,
 Ere yet the night ascends, to Pontus' camp
 Pharnaces will return ; even now we heard
 From certain tidings, that the prince's signet
 Receiv'd by Artabasus, had confirm'd
 His near approach—

Ter. My liege, the enemy
 Will feel new vigour from the expected sight
 Of young Pharnaces—ere a few short days
 Are past, th' advancing troops by Arcas led
 Will join our arms ; united then, our bands
 May rush to certain conquest.

Oron. Teramenes,
 Forgive me, if my soul revolts from counsels
 Which frigid prudence dictates—shall we then
 Remain inglorious, skulk within our walls,
 To wait uncertain aid—permit the foe
 To gather strength and courage from the presence
 Of this Pharnaces ?—O ! forbid it virtue !
 That virtue which has fired Bithynia's sons
 To glorious conquest and extended sway !

Lyc. My empire's hope ! on whose succeeding reign
 Sits expectation : this Pharnaces still
 Turns every scale of fight ; his towering spirit,
 Enthusiast of the battle, looks with scorn
 On vulgar honours ———

Oron. To this boasted hero,
 Deck'd in his foreign triumphs, send the trump
 Of stern defiance, that Pharnaces' arm
 May meet with mine before the camp, and give
 A glorious opening to the morn of war !

Lyc. —'Tis nobly utter'd—thy impatient sword
 May find employment—to the hostile camp
 A herald shall to-morrow bear our challenge
 To this Pharnaces, in the list'd field
 Next day to engage in single fight, the champion
 Bithynia's king shall send—but since the life
 Of my Orontes on the great event
 Suspended hangs—to thine six warriors more
 Shall join their dauntless names.

Oron.

Oron. Let instant lots
Decide the combatant ; or rather fix,
Without the chance of lots, Orontes' sword,
Which here he tenders, vowing from Pharnaces
To tear his recent spoils, and to the manes
Of your Polemon shed his life, or fall
Himself a victim, happy in the applause
Of his lov'd sovereign, and his country's tears.

Enter Arfetes.

Arf. Permit me, sir, since time with rapid wing
Now mocks my stay, to waken your remembrance
That call'd by fate to other ties which honour,
Which duty must enforce, Arfetes now
Prepares to leave the court, reluctant leave
That court, where Lycomedes' royal hand
Shed lavish honours on his poor desert.

Lyc. Yet ere thou goest, thy valour that has long
Sustain'd our arms, may add one labour more ;
For still methinks, Arfetes, would my soul
Detain thee here ; but fate, I know not why,
In thee from Lycomedes tears a hero,
Whom next Orontes he esteem'd his son ;
This very now, ere thy arrival here
A challenge was decreed to dare Pharnaces
To single fight—Orontes, 'midst the list
Of noble candidates for fame, demands
The glorious peril, let us add to these
Arfetes' name, and instant lots decide
The champion fated on his venturous sword
To bear Bithynia's vengeance—

Arf. [*aside*] Ha ! what means
My wayward destiny !

Oron. Behold the champion
Thy choice selects—see, Lycomedes, see,
Suspense is on his brow—Is this the man
Whose arms so oft—

Arf. Yes, 'tis the man, Orontes !
Who fought Bithynia's battles, he whose force—
But I am calm.—No, Lycomedes, think not
I shrink from honour's trial—should the lot
Bring forth Arfetes' name—believe me, sir,
Whate'er Pharnaces—I alone perhaps

Am doom'd his victor, when the world shall own
That what Pharnaces was, is then Arsctes.

Lyc. Enough, enough ;—thy zeal, Orontes, here
Prompts thee too far ; nor thou Arsctes, heed
Orontes' eager warmth---to dare beyond
The level of mankind, and bravely reach
At virtue's height, is all that human firmness
Can boast her own--Success, enthron'd above,
Beyond a mortal's power, by Heaven alone
Commission'd, crowns the deed---now let us hence---
The lots once drawn, soon as the fated morn
Ascends the steep to gild the turret's height,
Our knight shall wait the signal.

[*Exeunt Lyc. Ter. and Oron.*]

Ars. alone. Deity

Of blind events!--say, whither wouldst thou lead
Pharnaces now ?---yet let me once again
Behold my Cleonice, then forsake
This fatal realm, no more a feign'd ally
To tread with hostile step Bithynia's court.

Enter Cleonice.

She comes---once more 'tis given me to address
My Cleonice---'midst surrounding perils
Yet happy, if I once again can pour
My soul's full anguish here---

Cleo. Alas ! Arsctes,

What shall I say ? how speak my bosom's tumult ?
I fear too much I wrong'd thee ; tho' our fate
Can ne'er unite us, yet I feel my heart
Will never cast Arsctes from the throne
Where Love had plac'd him---

Ars. O ! thou most unkind !

What had I done to merit!--when my soul
With anguish bled---

Cleo. Alas ! I thought thee false,

And tho' I knew thou never could'st be mine,
I could not bear another should receive
That love, which once I deem'd was mine alone.

Ars. Another Cleonice ! is there then

Amidst the blooming circle of your sex [dar'd
A maid whose charms---what treacherous tongue has
Traduce my faith ?

Cleo.

Cleo. The king and Teramenes
Declar'd your purpose to espouse Arsinœ:
Fir'd at the thought, my rash ungovern'd temper—
Thou know'st the rest.—

Arf. Forbear, I know too much:
For this, thou could'st unheard condemn the man
That lives not but in thee; bid the same breath
That warn'd my love to rapture, like a frost
Nip every blossom of my future hopes!—
Thou never lov'dst.—

Cleo. Then wherefore am I wretched?
Unjust Arfetes! give me back, ye powers,
That blest indifference, when as yet this pulse
Had never learnt to beat, these nerves to tremble
With fear, suspense, with all the nameless train
That banish peace for ever—In Orontes
I view'd a Prince, to whom paternal care
Had pledg'd my nuptials; till a stranger's virtues
Drove every thought from Cleonice's breast
Of interest or ambition—still remember
I will—I would retain the inbred dignity
That suits the daughter of Bithynia's king.—
Enough, Arfetes, that my soul has stoop'd
To own her weakness—yet since cruel Fate
Forbids our union, when thy heart selects
Another love, may every happiness
That crowns the fondest pair.—

Arf. O! never, never!
This bosom traitor to its first.—

Cleo. The king.—

Enter Lycomedes.

Lyc. Well dost thou honour here the man whose sword
May turn the tide of victory—my daughter,
Behold Arfetes, now decreed to meet
In combat with Pharnaces—know, the lots
Of fate are drawn; our fate is in thy hands;
Thou art our champion.

Arf. Since the will of destiny
Seals me thy warrior; till the morn dissolves
The truce with Pontus, let me from the court
Awhile retire, on something that concerns
My weal, my honour—when the blush of dawn

Shall strike the altar on the forest's edge
 To Mars devoted, there thy guard shall find
 A champion arm'd to meet Bithynia's foe,
 If Artabalus' son accept the war.

Lyc. Till then the hours be all thy own—Nor claims
 Bithynia, or Bithynia's king, from thee
 But what befits thy honour—should success
 Attend our hero's arms, these walls shall ring
 With joyful pæans, and to crown the day
 With jubilee, the day that sets us free
 From such a foe, Orontes to the altar
 Shall lead his Cleonice; and the garlands
 Of Hymen's triumphs mingle with the palms
 Which victory displays—The important hour
 Demands my counsel hence—till next we meet,
 Farewell—and should Pharnaces, sway'd by virtue,
 Accept our challenge—may Polemon's death
 Sit on thy lance—a mother's grief and death
 Edge thy keen faulchion, and a father's sufferings
 Infuse new spirit in the day of fight,
 That every eye may view with tears of transport
 Arsetes' laurels and Bithynia's glory! [Exit.

Cleonice, Arsetes.

Cleonice.

[*pause*] Yet is there more! O, no! my fate has long
 Frown'd in the distant prospect—now the vision
 Draws near, and misery with rapid speed
 Rides on the advancing hour—thy life, Arsetes,
 Expos'd to peril in to-morrow's field
 Excites each fear—for thee my prayers shall pierce
 Jove's awful throne; yet must thy victory
 Doom me a wretch for ever—led to grace
 Thy triumph in Orontes' hated hands!
 Yet be it so—fate, honour, virtue, all
 Demand this sacrifice!—and should the event
 Of battle crown thee with the victor's wreath,
 And still Bithynia's vows detain thee here,
 Arsinœ be thy bright, thy dear reward—
 She loves thee, my Arsetes—yes—O Heaven!
 Why do I weep—let her bestow that happiness
 Which Cleonice never—

Arse

Arf. Still thou know'st not
 What fate has yet reserv'd—the ensuing combat
 May clear a mystery, which till now compell'd
 My bleeding heart had kept from all—from thee!
 Then by each past, now hopeless hour of love,
 Still cherish in thy breast the gentle flame
 Arsetes kindled, till the expected sun
 Sets on the battle's fate; our fate perhaps
 Hangs on the equal balance—Cleonice
 Will ne'er refuse these moments to Arsetes:
 Thou know'st not what I feel for thee, my soul
 Labours beneath a load of secret anguish;
 While danger, ambush'd in a thousand forms,
 Waits every step, and threatens my way with ruin.

Cleo. Thou hast prevail'd, Arsetes; and whate'er
 The fateful birth that waits to be disclos'd,
 My love shall hope the event——

Arf. The day declines,
 And warns me hence——

Cleon. O Heaven! we meet no more
 Till that eventful time! yet go, Arsetes;
 Go whither glory calls—Hear, every Power!
 Raise o'er his head the buckler of defence,
 Pluck from the hostile hand the nerve of strength,
 And bring him victor home—nor let a tear
 From Cleonice stain the hour that gives
 Bithynia safety, and Arsetes fame!

[*Exit.*

Arsetes, alone.

Methinks my pulse more quickly beats, and all
 My spirits rouse, as nearer to the goal
 Verges my fate.

Enter Agenor.

Arf. Agenor!

Age. O, my friend!

Reflect what perils hover round; some God
 (Forgive me, prince!) that frowns upon our rashness,
 Has form'd the labyrinth that threatens now——
 This combat by the king propos'd——

Arf. O, wherefore

Did not Orontes mark the champion's lot,
 Then Fate, perhaps—But yet, my friend, this fight,
 This mystic fight, may work some means to unravel
 The knot of destiny—The hour now presses;
 The herald soon will seek my father's camp.

Age.

Age. Then let us hence!—The warlike troops of Pontus

Impatient wait to see their prince return;
Whose glories won in distant climes, attract
Each listening ear, while every soldier, warm
With expectation, pants to view that face
Where Mars propitious in life's opening prime
With youthful graces blends the victor's smile—
Your father too——

Arf. I feel, I feel it here!

The godlike, virtuous ardor! yes, Agenor,
My soul is up in arms—methinks I see
Good Artabafus darting thro' the ranks
His ardent looks—methinks I hear him chide;
With fond paternal warmth, his tardy son.
Now, on his reverend cheek, where age begins
To shed its silver honours, stands the tear
Of tenderness, while all the parent longs
To see those features ripening into manhood,
Which last he view'd in early bloom—I hear
The shout of charging hosts! the neigh of steeds!
The battle joins, and no Pharnaces there!
Now danger stalks around, and Artabafus——
Distracting thought! fly, fly my best Agenor,
Fly to redeem our fame, and save a father! [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, another apartment.

Enter Orontes and Zopyrus.

Zop. Compose yourself, my lord.

Oron. Zopyrus, never——

Was it for this I deem'd his absence near,
And now behold him with Orontes join'd
In glory's list—nay more, by partial fortune
Declar'd Bithynia's champion!—Should he fall,
He leaves a name in arms to cope with mine!—
But should he conquer!—Hell is in that thought!
Who knows, Zopyrus!—whither may the king's
Too partial views incline?—The kingdom freed
From such a foe—Polemon's death reveng'd—
He may, perhaps, forget—The crown, Zopyrus,
That mistress of my soul, to which ambition
Points every aim, may grace a stranger's brow!

Zop:

Zop. What says Orontes?

Oron. This right arm might reach
His life—but policy forbids my hatred
To blaze abroad—The many blindly dote
On him they scarcely know—*Zopyrus, speak,*
Art thou my friend?—

Zop. Hold—let me think,—Orontes
Bears not the coward's scruples—there is yet
Perhaps a way—

Oron. Pause not, but speak ———

Zop. 'Tis here ———
Arsetes must not live—Give but the word,
He dies, and dies ere he can meet Pharnaces!

Oron. But how? ———

Zop. Thou know'st that I command the guard
To escort Arsetes from the fane of Mars
To meet Pharnaces; from a desperate band,
The power of gold, and vast reward, shall single
A chosen few, that at a signal given
Shall rid your soul of every fear in him:
And more to blind suspicion's eye, their arms,
Their vests shall seem of Pontus' troops: the deed
Effected once, the ensuing fight shall see
These tools of our great enterprise expos'd
Full in the front of slaughter, that in heat
Of onset they may fall, and in their fall
Mock all discovery.

Oron. Come to my breast!
By heaven it ripens well—Then, when he's dead,
We lead the troops to well feign'd vengeance!—Say
Where lies the force of Pontus?

Zop. Station'd near
Bithynia's bounds, that thrice an arrow's flight
May reach their outmost guard.

Oron. Now, hated rival!
Now triumph for a moment—My revenge
Prepares such greeting, never more thy deeds
Shall shine to vulgar eyes—on proud Arsetes
Death soon shall close his everlasting gate,
While life to me displays the glorious path
That leads the daring mind to fame and empire. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE, *An open place in the city.**Orontes alone.*

WHENCE is this seeming weight? shake off, my soul,

This lethargy, and be again Orontes.

The truce is ended—all is safe—Arsetes

Accepts our challenge—and ere this Arsetes

Waits at the forest's edge—How slowly night

Has dragg'd her course! at length the day returns

To lift his beams upon those eyes, that never

Must view his setting splendor—See! the king!—

Disimulation, spread thy subtlest snares,

Teach me to amuse the fond credulity

Of easy fools, with shew of what my heart

Disdains to feel—but hold—

Enter Lycomedes, attended.

Lyc. Yon' orient sun,

That, glancing from the dewy mountain, sheds

The day-spring's early blushes, on this morn

Shines with redoubled lustre: on this morn,

That gives Arsetes to the field of fame

Our empire's champion—O, my best Orontes!

This hour, methinks, the hand of Heaven once more

On destiny's eternal page begins

To enroll Bithynia's honours—Speak, my son!

Thy generous soul, now wrapt with glory, pants

To share Arsetes' danger.

Oront. Lycomedes,

I own my spirit rouses at the call

Of martial conflict; yet, forbid it, Heaven!

My heart, impell'd by envy, should repine

To view another's honours—by the hand

Of Mars, the patron of my wars, I swear

There's not a breast would feel Orontes' joy,

To hear the fate my ardent hope divines

This morn awaits the glories of Arsetes.

Lyc. O truly great!—nor think thy noble sword

Shall useless sleep; no—should the great event

Thy soul forebodes, attend Arsetes' valour,

Thyself with Teramenes join'd, shall pour

Our eager thousands on the troops dismay'd

Of

Of Pontus : Arcas shall arrive to join
 Our glorious arms ; and universal victory
 Clap her glad wings—then every happy wreath,
 That hope had form'd, shall deck these hoary temples,
 And choral virgins hymn Bithynia's bands
 Return'd in triumph home ! Our Teramenes,
 Already now, in pomp of martial pride,
 Leaves these glad walls, and swells with war's deep notes
 The soldier's ardor, while the plated mail
 Heaves on each bosom——

Enter Cleonice, attended.

O, my Cleonice !

Age now, with backward gaze, on memory's plain
 Revives forgotten honours—Say, my child ;
 Owns not thy heart a more than woman's feelings
 On this eventful moment !——

Cleon. Yes, my soul

Expands to greater hopes—each other thought
 Now sleeps neglected—while the mightier claims
 Of filial duty and my country's love
 Possess me whole—the noble mind that draws
 Its boasted lineage from a race of kings ;
 Of kings, the sacred delegates of Heaven ;
 Should banish every selfish view that tends not
 To wide diffusive good——Oh ! should the hand
 Of prosperous fortune mark this happy day,
 What thousands then would hail with rapture's voice
 Arsetes' blest return !——for this event
 Old age shall lift his wrinkled palms in praise ;
 The virgin's tears shall vanish into smiles ;
 Redoubled warmth shall nerve the soldier's arm ;
 Till conquest swell the breath of fame to spread
 Bithynia's deeds, and lift her name to Heaven !

(dead march at a distance.)

Lyc. Whence is that sound ? that martial symphony
 With Teramenes !——these are other strains
 Than joy or victory !——

Cleon. The notes of sorrow !——
 And now 'tis silence all !——*(music)*——Again !

Oran. My heart
 Beats high with anxious hope and fear.

(aside.)
Lyc.

Lyc. Orontes!

What do I see! these aged eyes distinguish
A martial train with low inverted pikes,
And banners trailed to earth!—and hark! more near
Methinks I hear deep murmurs of distress,
And mingled groans, that peal in fancy's ear
Arsetes' name! —————

Cleon. Arsetes!—look, my father,
The low-hung trophy and the dusty arms—

[*Enter in procession a troop of soldiers, to a dead march, advancing slowly from the further end of the stage, first a company trailing their lances and trophies in the dust, then the helmet, shield, and lance of Arsetes, borne by two soldiers; next Teramenes, and last a bier with a dead body, covered with a mantle, the soldiers bearing branches of cypress and palm: the procession advancing towards the front of the stage, balls, and the music ceases.*]

Cleonice advancing towards the trophies.

Ha! sure I know that crest! That buckler's orb
Blaz'd with Arsetes' honours! —————

Lyc. Teramenes,

Whence is this dreadful pomp of death?

Ter. I cannot —————

I cannot speak! —O, royal sir, behold
Bithynia's champion! broken is the lance
Of war, the genius of the battle faints!
Arsetes is no more!—lo! there he lies

Pale from the hand of fate, no more to wake

To fame, to virtue, or Bithynia's cause. (*Cleo. faints.*)

Lyc. My daughter! —Heaven! why am I thus un-
mov'd!

When age, unfeeling, sinks not with the stroke
That now perchance ————— But she revives—remove her
From this heart-breaking scene —————

Cleo. (recovering) Yet hold—fear —————

Ye shall not tear me hence—despair and grief
Now freeze my seat of life; the dreadful tidings
Shall load each passing gale, and every virgin,
Whose breast has known the agonies of love,
Lament with me, and mark this day, with horror!

Lyc. What means my daughter!

Cleon.

Cleon. Pardon, Lycemedes ;
Orontes, pardon—to dissemble further
Were insult to his corse—I lov'd Arsetes,
And I avow my flame——

Oron. In all, my rival!

Lyc. Unhappy girl!—yet think not I will chide ;
I feel thy anguish here !——

Ter. Where now is faith !
Where royal trust in princes !—while Arsetes
Thus falls a sacrifice to murderous treason,
And ends his life by an assassin's sword !

Lyc. Ha ! murder'd, Teramenes !——

Oron. Speak ; relate
Each horrid circumstance !——

Ter. Thou know'st, Arsetes
Directed, that Zopyrus might attend
Two hours from dawning day at Mars's altar :
But ere th' appointed time, a band of ruffians
Attack'd the hapless youth ; in vain his valour
Oppos'd their fury ; cover'd o'er with wounds,
Senseless he fell ; but when Zopyrus came
And ask'd, with tears, the assassin's name, his eyes
Then nearly clos'd he rais'd, and murmur'd forth
Pharnaces' name, and died !

Oron. (*aside.*) Be firm, my soul,
And hide thy secret triumph !

Lyc. 'Tis enough !
Pharnaces !—Artabafus !—Gods, I thank you !——

Cleon. I weep not now—my heart would fain assume
The cruel firmness of unfeeling woe !
Arsetes murder'd ! murder'd by Pharnaces !
Where, where was justice, where the guardian powers
That watch o'er virtue !—Yet, it will not be——
My resolution melts, and Nature pays
This streaming anguish to Arsetes' memory !

Lyc. My child, my Cleonice, in thy sorrows
A king and father share—for prayers and tears
Are all an old man's weapons : hoary age,
That breaks the vigour of Alcides, leaves
These idle sinews useless as the arms
Of female weakness !

Cleon. Why, eternal Powers!
 Why is not courage given to woman? shall not
 Resentment brace our sex's feeble arm!
 I feel, I feel it now—my bosom swells
 With fury, with distraction—See Polemon,
 A bleeding sacrifice!—lo! next my mother
 In death's convulsive pangs, and lost Arfetes,
 The murder'd victim of the worst of foes!

Lyc. Hear, mighty Jove! and send thy dread vice-
 gerent
 To weigh in equal scales the deeds of men!
 See, Cleonice—see where Artabafus
 Shrinks in the awful trial!—soon, my daughter,
 Vengeance shall rear her bloody crest—Pharnaces
 Shall pay the forfeit of his deed.

Cleon. 'Tis there
 My hopes alone can triumph—
[here the bier is brought forward.]

Lycomedes,
 Thou know'st my weakness—then permit me here
 To pay one mournful tribute—one last look,
 To poor Arfetes! *[advancing towards the bier.]*

Lyc. Hold! my Cleonice,
 It is too much—forebear!—the nearer view
 May start thee into frenzy.

Cleo. No, my father,
 I can—I will support it—*[approaching the body]* Is this
 Arfetes!

Is this Bithynia's triumph!—See the mantle
 That wraps his clay-cold limbs, the fatal present
 Of Cleonice's hand!—O, my Arfetes!
 Pale, pale and lifeless!—murderous slaves!—O where,
 Where are those eyes that shed their beams of love
 On Cleonice! where those lips that wak'd
 The heart-felt tenderness!—Distraction!—Hear me,
 O Heaven!—Arfetes, hear!—while thus I clasp
 Thy senseless corse, while yet thy spirit hovers
 O'er thy cold clay, in pity to our sorrows!
 O never shall these eye-lids know repose,
 This breast be still'd to comfort—never—never
 Till this accurs'd Pharnaces—Ha!—look there!
 Th' exulting murderer triumphs!—Stay, Pharnaces—

Fly

Fly not—behold, he bleeds!—see there the dread
Tribunal met, where Minos lifts the urn ———
His justice shall avenge my dear Arsetes! [Exit.

Lyc. Her griefs are wild—attend and sooth her sor-
rows. (to attendants, as they go out.

Oron. Tears are but woman's tribute—to the soldier
A soldier pays for other dues—Arsetes
Demands Bithynia's gratitude—Here rest
Your honour'd load, while on the cold remains
Of this lamented chief, Orontes vows
An offering to his shade——O! Sir, permit me
To second, with my own, the soldier's zeal.

Lyc. Thou art my age's hope, the stay on which
My kingdom leans—take all thy courage claims,
Go—lead the troops to arms.

Oron. This sword, that oft
Has fought my sovereign's cause, again unsheath'd,
Thirsts for the blood of Pontus——Yes, I see,
I see the genius of Arsetes lead
The embattled squadrons, while his spirit still
Breathes in each breast, and marks the foe for vengeance.
[Exit.

Lyc. Be it our care to pay the last sad rites
To lost Arsetes—to the clouds ascend
His funeral flame, and call the Gods to witness
Our grateful tribute to the chief we mourn;
Then in a sacred vase select with care
His dear remains, to place them near the urn
Where the lov'd relics of Polemon, borne
A mournful trophy, ever in our sight,
Feeds still our grief, and ministers the gale
That blows the smother'd flame of deep revenge!

[Exeunt, the procession going off in order.

SCENE, a private apartment.

Enter Orontes and Zopyrus.

Oron. Destruction to my hopes! what Gods averse
Could blast my fortune further!—Can it be!
Zopyrus—all our schemes abortive thus!
What he, whom lifeless now the city mourns,
Is not Arsetes—Arsetes and Pharnaces
The same—

Zop. There is no room for doubt—the tablets

Found on the vestments of the slain unknown,
Confirm the important truth.

Oron. Unthinking wretch !

A thousand proofs recur, that speak too plain —
His birth conceal'd—surprise when Lycomedes
Propos'd the combat with the prince---distraction !
A turr like this may frustrate all !---it seems
With tenfold ruin !---Cleonice's love
To this Arsctes starts another train
Of galling doubts ——— What's to be done ?

Zop. Already

The soldier pants impatient on the edge
Of battle---Who can tell the event ? Pharnaces
May fall, and crown your wish.

Oron. But still the chance

Of war is ever doubtful---Could we draw
Pharnaces from the tumult of the fight,
The tufted grove, that shades the fane of Mars,
Might hide an ambush'd force, to overwhelm at once
Our foe in swift destruction.

Zop. 'Tis a thought

The cause itself inspires.

Oron. Zopyrus, go ;

Inflame the soldiers with Arsctes' name,
That name shall second our design---I haste
To lead them to the field---away--- [Exit Zopyrus.

Oron. (alone.) Ascend,

Black Mischief, child of hell, from the dire gloom
Of burning Acheron, whence perfidy,
Assassination, treason, (names that shake
The coward soul) breathe forth inspiring aid
To vast Ambition, at whose dazzling shrine
Orontes ever bends---I feel, I feel
The sacred influence here---If Fortune yet
Assist my arms, in fight Pharnaces falls
An open victim ; but if still averse
She thwart my glorious aims, what force denies,
Deep covert guile shall give ; and all my fears
Be hush'd for ever in Pharnaces' blood. [Exit.

S C E N E, the camp of Artabasus.

Enter Artabasus and Pharnaces.

Art. Yes, my Pharnaces, my full bosom heaves

With

With all a father's feelings—every God
 That knows the transport here, receive my vows
 Of gratitude and praise : thy blest return
 Each year shall chronicle ; on that glad day
 The hallowed fanes shall grateful incense breathe
 To those high powers, whose providential care
 Reliev'd my anxious fears---Pharnaces lives !
 In safety lives, clasp'd in these arms of fondness ;
 Yet I could chide—for O ! reflect, my son,
 How I have suffer'd in thy painful absence,
 Could'st thou so far forget ———

Phar. O, royal sir !
 Believe me, while I swear, that oft the son
 Reproach'd the lover, oft I sympathiz'd
 With Artabafus.

Art. Tho' to partial nature
 The warmer fallies of ungovern'd youth,
 Ere long experience turns the page of life,
 Are venial errors, yet thy rashness here
 Startles belief---What perils hast thou 'scap'd !
 What deathful snares ! perhaps, a fate like his,
 Whom all Bithynia for Arsêtes mourns.
 Thou saidst it was Araxes---

Phar. 'Twas Araxes,
 Whose mien and near resemblance to your son
 Assisted my design---When at my suit
 You gave consent to accept Arsêtes' challenge,
 I trusted to Araxes' breast my secret,
 Disguis'd him in the vest and arms I wore,
 When 'midst Bithynia's squadrons, with design
 Himself should for Arsêtes' wage the combat,
 Instructed first to yield himself my prisoner :
 From hence I hop'd to plan some happy means
 Of peace, by conference open'd with the foe.
 But this distressful fate, mysterious Heaven
 Has cast on poor Araxes, baffles all ;
 And leaves me lost, uncertain whither points
 This deed, or what inhuman breast design'd it.

Art. Swear, my Pharnaces, never more to tempt
 Our hostile Gods in Lycomedes' court,
 Nor give that life to hazard, which thy father
 Would ransom with his own.

Phar. (kneels.) By this rever'd,
This awful hand, Pharnaces vows to sacrifice,
His all to filial duty, every act
Of his succeeding life shall speak the son;
And O! if Fate requires! even Love itself
Shall bleed a victim at the shrine.

Art. Think not
That Artabasus will condemn the love
That honour sanctifies---for Cleonice,
If ever Rumour's tongue can claim belief,
She merits all you feel---Nay, more, my soul
Could witness Lycomedes' regal virtues,
Did not ambition, that excess of kings,
That thirst of widen'd empire, that too far
Inspir'd his early reign, now, even in age
Impel him to unsheath invasion's sword.
The king, who, urg'd by partial glory, breaks
The sacred ties that link a social world,
Should boast no more the image of those Gods,
Whose wide benevolence extends o'er all!

Phar. Still, still my hopes, with fond presumption,
form'd
Ideal scenes of happiness---Could Peace,
With outstretch'd arms, embrace the warring nations,
Could Lycomedes learn one self-same spirit,
Inform'd his foe Pharnaces, and his once
Belov'd Arsetes---Yet I dare, my father,
Boast a soft advocate in Cleonice.

Art. O my Pharnaces, what can filial duty
With him that loves, and loves like Artabasus!
Ere day can yield to night, a trusty herald
Shall to Bithynia's king, try every art
Of eloquence, to bend his soul to terms
That fit the king and father---Grant it, Heaven!
The day that sees my lov'd Pharnaces happy,
Gives Artabasus all---Then close, ye Powers
Life's anxious scenes, and let me sleep in peace---
Whence is that noise? [Alarm and shout.]

Enter Agenor, his sword drawn.

Agen. To arms, my liege, the foe,
Led by Orontes, issuing from the town,
Advances on our camp. —

Phar.

Phar. Orontes !---Heaven
Has heard Pharnaces' prayer---My lord, my father,
My soul's on fire, and pants to meet in field
My hated rival !---

Art. Go, Agenor ; bear
Our instant orders to the troops, to range
Their serried files---Pharnaces leads them on
To fight---to victory---

Phar. Hear, God of Arms !
Whose smiles have grac'd my earliest youth---O hear
This last request---Still in Pharnaces breathe
The spirit of the war !---

Art. Thy ardor wakes
My youth again---Hear now, a father's voice ;
With thy strong genius, lead him thro' the maze
Of dangerous battle, that these eyes may trace
His fearless steps, behold his brandish'd sword
Shine forth the guardian of a nation's honour ;
And, while his arm asserts his country's cause,
Assert the common rights of all mankind. [Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE, *An apartment on the summit of a
tower, commanding a prospect of the fields without the
walls. Two urns on two pedestals.*

Cleonice, (alone.) O Night ! that soon wilt stretch oblivion's
wing
O'er many a wretch, drive on the lagging shades
And close the day's dire horrors !---tho' to me
Sleep brings no refuge, yet congenial gloom
Befits my anguish---five revolving years
Thy senseless ashes in their peaceful dwelling
Have every day, Polemon, wak'd remembrance,
And oft receiv'd the tributary tears.
But here's a stroke surpassing all---Arsetes
Shrunk to this narrow space !---at early dawn
He tower'd in arms---a little hour he lay
A breathless corse, and here his sad remains
Warm from the funeral flame, are clos'd for ever !

Enter Arsinœe.

If thou bring'st comfort, speak !

Ars. Alas ! my friend,
I know it not---since from the walls my father

Led

Led forth his followers, to support the attack
Of brave Orontes on the foe, suspense
Has dwelt on all—the citizens affrighted
Hearken to every sound, that whispers aught
Of fight or victory— *(distant alarms.)*
Heaven guard my father.

Cleo. Sure 'tis the distant murmur of the fight
That swells upon the wind, and see, Arsinöe,
Ere yet the shade of evening faintly spreads
O'er the dun fields, see thro' the dusty whirl
The flash of arms—

Arf. But hark! some hasty foot
Sounds on the steps that lead to this recess:
O! let me fly, and ease my beating heart
For Teramenes' safety!

[Exit.]

Cleo. Nearer still
I hear the deepening roar—another shout!—
There, there perhaps, Pharnaces, hated name!
Sheds wide destruction!—can it be, ye Powers!
Can he who stoop'd to murder, rise in aught
That's great or noble? sure Arsetes' shade
Should hover round, and in the day of battle
Wither his strength!—Some fatal news at hand!
'Tis Teramenes—Heavens!—

Enter Teramenes, and Officer.

Ter. Where, where's the king?
—O Cleonice ———

Cleo. Speak—

Ter. Bithynia's lost!—
Our latest hour is come.—

Enter Lycomedes.

Lyc. What means this tumult?
What from the camp—but now a peal of shouts
Broke on my slumbering sense—how stand our hopes?

Ter. The foe is in the walls!—our bands repuls'd
By Artabasus and his son, retreated
To gain the gates—with them the conquering troops
Of Pontus enter'd. ———

Lyc. 'Tis enough—these eyes
Have seen enough of woe!—Where is Orontes?

Ter. I saw him last, with dauntless courage, brave
The hostile troops, when headed by Pharnaces

They

They thunder'd thro' the gates, at which dire moment
 He vanish'd from my sight, and O! I fear
 He falls a victim to this dreadful day!—
 But time forbids our vain laments—this instant
 The victor may be here—one way remains
 That yet may save my king—the western tower
 Is still our own, and may perhaps sustain
 The foe's attack, till Arcas shall arrive—
 But now, Arsinöe thither with a guard
 I sent—retire, my liege, with Cleonice,
 In safety there.

Lyc. No—tho' this trembling arm
 Shrinks from the buckler's weight, I can provoke
 The death I wish for from the pitying foe!
 Come forth, this sword, that long has idly slept,
 Shall once again——

Cleo. What means my father?—yet
 Retract your purpose—think on Cleonice!
 Forsaken here—I see, I see the hand
 Of ruffian force drag by the silver locks
 Thy venerable age—I see those features,
 That oft have fondly smil'd on Cleonice,
 In agony distorted.—What remains
 For me at that curst moment?—wild with horror
 To rend my scatter'd hair—against the pavement
 Dash these poor limbs—then bare my breast to meet
 The steel, yet reeking with a parent's life,
 And mingle blood with his that gave me being!——

Lyc. Distracting image!—O my child! my child!
 And shall I then—this moment I could yield
 The last cold drops that linger in these veins—
 And bless the hand that struck me—yet when Death
 Draws his dark veil—to catch a glimpse of life,
 But to behold thee die—Haste, let me hence
 To lose the dreadful thought—a minute longer
 May place us safe beyond the future reach
 Of fate, of misery, and Artabasus!

Cleo. O, hear me still—yet let these filial tears
 Prevail.—Death is the last, the sure resource,
 And when Fate closes every path that leads
 To future hope—this arm can then my father
 Fix one great period to a life of woes.

Ter. My sovereign, Artabafus and Barzanes
Are near at hand, from hence we may discern
Their bucklers blaze [*looking out*]; away, my liege!

Lyc. O! never! —
They shall be met—these withered limbs—look there,
See those sad monuments— [*points to the urns.*]
And shall the hands,

The murderous hands by which they fell, here grasp
The sword in triumph?—No, these rambling feet
Shall meet their fury. [*Going.*]

Cleo. Yet—O yet, my father!
One moment hear—

Ter. Forgive me, royal sir!
If thus compell'd—Learchus, help—

Lyc. [*Struggling.*] Unhand me—
'Tis more than treason—hence!

[*drops his sword in the struggle.*]

Cleo. Lo! there, my father,
Some God descends, and from your nerveless arm
Strikes your resisting weapon.

Lyc. O, shame! shame!
'Tis sure the work of Heaven!—then all is past!
I yield—Lead, lead me where thou wilt! [*Shout.*]

Ter. Again!
Conduct them safely thro' the secret gate,
Meantime myself, with some few friends will seek
Orontes, and secure my King's retreat. [*Exit.*]

Cleon. O! hear me, Heaven! for Lycomedes hear!
Still save him, sinking in this gulph of ruin!
Or let one moment whelm us both in death,
And end a father's and a daughter's woes! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *an open place in the city.*

Enter Artabafus, Barzanes, and Soldiers.

Arta. Thus far, Barzanes, has the victor wreath
Crown'd virtue with success—our arms, by Heaven
Impell'd to guard the sacred rights of men,
Have to their deep recess pursu'd the foe,
The city now is ours—the hostile bands
Submissive, or dispers'd, contend no longer;
Then sheath the sword of death, and bid resentment
To mercy yield her reign—the noble mind,
Tho' Justice draw the sword, regrets that triumph
Humanity

Humanity must mourn: for Lycomedes,
Give heedful orders, that whate'er shall chauce,
To make him prisoner, to our better fortune,
They treat him with such honours as befit
His name and rank, a captive of the war.

Enter Officer.

My liege, this instant Lycomedes taken,
With Cleonice, as they sought to gain.
The western tower, conducted by the guard,
Attend your sovereign will.

[*Exit.*

Enter Lycomedes, Cleonice in chains, Guards.

Lyc. (Entering) Lead me to him,
Whom Lycomedes' evil star has rais'd
On fallen Bithynia's ruin--Cleonice
Associate in thy father's woes ----- Are these
The hands that once I fondly press'd in mine,
When on my knee thy prattling infancy
Held me in all a parent's dear suspense?
Are these lov'd hands now clasped in rugged steel
And slavish manacles?

Cleo. These hands, my father,
Exult in chains that give to Cleonice,
A glorious share in Lycomedes' sufferings,
Nor are they bonds, since still these filial arms
Embrace my father--O I believe me, sir,
To suffer thus with you is height of bliss,
Compar'd to freedom banish'd from your presence.

Art. If thou art he--O, Lycomedes!--hear
No more thy foe, but brother--would to Heaven
Thy age would now repose in peace! those hairs
Demand respect and honour--let me then
Exchange these slavish ties, for other ties
Of amity and love.

[*makes a sign to the guard who takes off his chains.*

For thee, fair princess,
What shall I say?--these arms prophan'd demand
More than a king's atonement.--(*takes off her chains.*)
Is there aught
Beside the gift of freedom?

Cleo. Artabasis,
There needs no more--from him that slew my brother
All gifts are equal--tho' to the woman's weakness

I yield

I yield these tears, my firmer soul disdains
 The tribute nature pays;---then once again
 Restore those shackles---give me, to the depth
 Of dungeon gloom---there's not a hostile pang
 That enmity inflicts, but Cleonice
 Shall meet it all!--My father too!--O, Heaven!
 Hence female softness---yes, behold that weak
 Depress'd old age, behold this bloom of youth
 Nurs'd in the pomp of courts---yet, Artabasus,
 This pair, unshaken, dares your worst of pains.

Lyc. Hear every God my vows renew'd---hear too
 Polemon's shade! whene'er this hand shall join
 In friendly league with Pontus, haunt each hour
 Of ebbing life with horror's direst forms!

Art. Yet hear me, Lycomedes, still reflect,
 Thyself a warrior once, in fight he fell,
 Fell as a hero ounht.--In arms of old
 When Demi-gods have fought, the fields have oft
 Borne slaughter'd chiefs, whose parents from the sky
 View'd their pale sons, and yielded to their fate.

Lyc. Hear, hear, ye fathers; hear how cool the victor
 Can palliate death, and sooth a parent's loss.
 Polemon fell in fight---yes, Artabasus,
 Nobly indeed he fell---too daring youth!
 Whose unsledg'd open valour met the arm
 Of veteran cruelty---but hear, proud man,
 Do all thy enemies so fairly perish?---
 How died Arsetes? hapless youth,---the last,
 The glorious work of Artabasus' race!
 Midst all my sufferings, still I joy to know
 Polemon died a hero---Had the hand
 Of Time drawn out his early age to years
 Of ripe experience, he, like poor Arsetes,
 Had fall'n the murderer's victim.

Art. Little, sure,
 Thou know'st the work of fate,---the youth who fell
 Was by Pharnaces ---

Cleo. By Pharnaces!--yes,
 I know it well---Is this the glorious hero,
 The boasted pupil in the school of Mars?
 Did he for this in Rome's immortal ranks
 Learn the brave trade of arms, to edge the sword

Of base assassination, that the wiles
 Of black conspiracy might catch that life,
 Which ne'er had sunk in equal field of combat !
 Yes—my Arfetes—to Pharnaces' cruelty
 Thou fall'st a victim—fall'st by him, whose arm
 Had else perhaps confess'd thy valour's force.
 Then had those limbs, my father, never felt
 The weight of chains—yet should Orontes live,
 His valorous arm—perhaps Pharnaces' life
 Atones for poor Arfetes—

Arta. Every power
 Forbid the implication ! Lycomedes,
 Could I as well appease each vengeful thought
 For lost Solomon, as I now can clear
 The virtue of my son, by lying fame
 Traduc'd—

Cleon. Did not his lips all pale in death
 Proclaim Pharnaces guilty ?

Arta. There indeed,
 Mysterious darkness lurks—but, Lycomedes,
 Speak—should the hero whose triumphant arm
 Espous'd Bithynia's cause—should he yet live—

Cleon. Yet live ! what means this cruel sport with woe ?

Arta. Hear then, and wondering hear—Arfetes lives,
 Arfetes and Pharnaces are the same.

Lyc. The same !—speak, Artabafus—

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Haste, my sovereign !
 Haste to the grove of palms,—the prince assail'd
 By numbers, with Orontes at their head,
 A hundred lances glitter at his breast,
 And all their cry is vengeance and Arfetes.

Arta. What do I hear ! now, cruel Lycomedes,
 Now, Cleonice, glut your rage,—yet know
 Arfetes lives, and lives in my Pharnaces,
 Or this dread moment seals perhaps his doom,
 And ends a wretched parent !—

[*Exeunt Artabafus and Barzanes attended.*

E

Cleo.

Cleo. Does he live,
Live in Pharnaces! O mysterious Heaven!
Should it be thus, how has my ruthless hatred
Pursued the man whom most I lov'd—the man
(Madness is in the thought) who now may breathe
His last.

Lyc. Forbid it, virtue!—Gods! I feel
A secret impulse here—it must not be—
For me he oft has triumph'd—spite of age
And impotence of strength, yet will I face
This last, this fatal scene—my Cleonice,
Thy courage will pursue thy father's steps;
Come, let us prove the worst of fortune's malice,
Then close our eyes in peace, and rest for ever!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *a grove of palm trees, with the temple of
Mars discovered at a distance.*

(*Clashing of swords.*)

*Enter Orontes retreating before Pharnaces, a party of
Orontes driven off by the soldiers of Pharnaces.*

Phar. Enough, my friends; enough—this life demands
My sword alone—for thee, whose murderous guile
With seeming manhood, drew me from the fight
To fall by numbers, from this arm receive
Thy treason's due reward.

Oron. Fortune at length
Deceives my aim;—but be it so—I scorn
To deprecate thy vengeance—well thou know'st
Orontes now—Zopyrus has confess'd,
Pale, trembling dastard! sinking by thy arm,
Our first device against the feign'd Arsetes—
This last is mine—tho' interest and ambition
Forbid me now to risk an equal combat,
Yet since thy hated genius still prevails,—
Hence every vain disguise—as man to man,
I dare thy worst.

Phar. Behold, thou double traitor!
The grove and temple where Araxes fell:

Where

Where now thy followers lurk'd in fatal ambush
 To ensnare Pharnaces—tremble now, while justice
 Here lifts the sword on this devoted spot,
 Here claims a sacrifice to every virtue,
 Faith, friendship, loyalty, and poor Araxes! (*fight.*
Arta. [*within*] Defend, defend my son! (*Oron-falls.*
Phar. ——— There sink for ever,
 Nor leave thy equal here to curse mankind!

Enter ARTABASUS and AGENOR.

Arta. Art thou then safe?—my son! my son!
Phar. ——— My father!

Enter LYCOMEDES, CLEONICE, and TERAMENES.

Cleon. [*Entering.*] Death has been busy—sure the
 battle's tumult

Rag'd here but now——

Phar. [*turning.*] 'Tis Cleonice's voice!

Lyc. He lives indeed! 'tis he!—the guardian genius
 That watch'd Bithynia's safety——

Cleon. ——— Heavenly powers!

And yet it cannot—speak,—O speak, my father,

Ere this lov'd phantom——

Phar. ——— Still Arsctes lives;

Behold him here;——[*kneels*]——No more unknown,
 who now

Asserts the lineal honours that await

A kingdom's heir and Artabasus' son.

Cleon. Pharnaces, rise,—sure 'tis illusion all!

What then was he, whose pale and lifeless corse——

Arta. The youth, whom late you mourn'd for slain
 Arsctes,

Was in his stead deputed for the fight.

Phar. Orontes and Zopyrus have confess'd

The snare in which this hapless victim fell;

Orontes drew me now, by fraudulent ambush,

To perish here—behold where lies the traitor;

His guilty life fast ebbing with his blood.

Lyc. Orontes!—where! then where is virtue, Gods!

Now only living with Bithynia's foes!
 Why, Artabafus, did Polemon fall?
 Or fall by thee!

Oron. [*raising himself*] Hear, most unhappy father,
 Thou seek'st revenge Polemon's death,—behold
 Him now reveng'd—lo! here his murderer lies!

Arta. The youth that fell by me!

Oron. By thee he fell,
 But fell unwounded—to his tent convey'd
 Senseless awhile, he lay—myself alone
 Watch'd his returning life—at that fell moment,
 Ambition, powerful fiend! held forth to view
 Bithynia's crown—my sacrilegious hand
 Uplifted then, with murderous weapon struck
 My prince's life.

Lyc. What do I hear!—my blood
 Is chill'd!—pernicious villain!—take the vengeance
 A father's fury—[*Andrus, and is held by Art. and Ter.*]

Cleon. Gracious Heaven!—my brother!

Tera. Yet hold—tho' great your woe,—the guilty
 wretch
 Already gasps in death, and shivering stands
 On that dread brink, where vast eternity
 Unfolds her infinite abyss.

Lyc. Polemon!
 My murder'd boy!

Oron. O thou bright sun! whose beams
 Now set in blood, dost thou not haste to veil
 Thy head in night, while Nature, thro' her works
 Shrinks from a wretch like me!—Come, deepest dark-
 ness,

Hide, hide me from myself!—hence, bleeding phantom—
 Why dost thou haunt me still!—another!—hence!
 They drive me to the precipice—I sink—
 —O Lycomedes!

[*dies.*]

Lyc. Lo! there lies the serpent
 That late I nourish'd in my breast, to sting
 My unsuspecting heart—

Arta. A father's nature
 Feels for thy dreadful trial—Lycomedes,
 Receive this pledge of friendship—'till be thine
 Bithynia's crown, nor chain I aught from conquest

But

But mutual peace——some other time shall tell
 This work of fate——But who shall search the ways
 Of Heaven inscrutable, or dare to question
 Why the same power beheld Polemon fall,
 And sav'd Pharnaces for a father's love ?
 'Tis ours with humble praise to take from Jove
 The cordial draught of joy, nor murmur when
 He deals the cup of woe.

Lyco.

O. Artabafus !

No longer now my foe——this honour'd hand,
 This hand now free from my Polemon's death,
 Confirm the brother's union——balmy peace
 Rest with his manes, and remembrance ever
 With odorous praise surround his laurell'd tomb !
 But yet I have a son—in thee he lives,
 Lives in Pharnaces——[embraces]——Yes, my more
 than brother,

Our friendship knit shall plant the welcome olives
 Thro' both our lands, and bless their sons with peace !

Phar. It must, it must——some genius whispers now
 Oblivion to my cares, and bright-wing'd Hope,
 Like Cleonice, points my soul to bliss !

Lyco. If bliss be Cleonice, she is yours.
 Once more, my son——

Arta.

My daughter——every God
 Propitious smile to crown your virtuous love !

Phar. Speak, Cleonice ! does thy heart refuse
 To own the mighty rapture ?

Cleon.

O. Pharnaces !

Think how my bosom throbs with various tumult
 Of mingled joy and grief——My brother's fate
 Still labours here, 'spite of the bliss that fills
 My conscious heart ; for bliss it is to avow
 My boundless passion——wife of my Pharnaces,
 Or rather that dear name which first subdu'd
 My virgin heart——my ever-lov'd Arsetes !

Lyco. To thee, my son Pharnaces, I resign
 Bithynia's crown, while I, retir'd in ease,
 Steal gently down the peaceful vale of life.

Arta. Behold the latent treason brought to light !
 Tho' hid from mortal eye, the Eternal Mind
 Pervades the deepest gloom——Confess, my brother,

The dazzling meteor that mid'd thy youth,
 And even seduc'd thy age, the monarch fr'd
 With false ambition for a conqueror's name,
 Is but the lash of Jove to scourge mankind,
 For thee, my son, by Lycomedes rais'd
 To guide, with early hand, the reins of empire,
 Remember what the duty of a king
 Exacts, while each domestic bliss shall crown
 Thy private hours, to watch thy people's weal,
 And share, like Heaven, thy happiness with all.



EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BULKLEY.

OUR author, all submission, sends me here,
To make excuses for your simple cheer;
And I, that have no interest in his scenes,
Must bear the train of tragic kings and queens.
Shall I support the weakness of his Muse?
Egad—if so—I'll sit him with abuse—
I'll soon dissect his fine-spun work, and show
That all his plot has more of force than wit.

For, after all, the creature's much deceiv'd,
If e'er he thinks his tale can be believ'd.

So tame and forlornimate his maid is—

How very different from our modern ladies!

What, could a blooming lass with ripen'd charms,

Be held so long from her admirer's arms?

If such were truths in prudish Heathen climes,

Examples vary in our later times—

Then for theatric play—how poor! how cold!

A heroine's language should be nobly bold,

Outstrip the decency of vulgar life,

Mouth at the Heavens, and set the Gods at strife.—

Time was indeed, an antiquated bard

Paid to that beldame, Nature, some regard,

And drew his females with such simple features,

That all, who saw, believ'd them human creatures.

Plain Desdemona bore no trace of art,

And Portia play'd a wife's domestic part;

While Constance shew'd, but what before we knew,

And only griev'd, as real mothers do.—

Shall this stale poet give the Drama law,

Who poorly copied only what he saw?

Nay, stale from life, in every clime and age,

The characters that fill his boasted page?—

Well!

EPILOGUE.

*Well! as I live, 'tis he!—(looking out)—O, are
you come?*

Does all go well?—poor devil!—seal his doom.

This live-long night he watches every eye,

Talks, like his heroes, in soliloquy—

Then starts aside—"What! something goes amiss?—

"Sure 'tis the distant murmur of a hiss!"—

Alas! kind soul!—I pity his condition,

And will in his behalf this House petition:—

To you, good folks above, for ever ready

To serve a friend, all English hearts and steady!

To you, ye men of candour, sense, and wit,

Who fill the circle of this awful pit;

To you, ye ladies, ever prone to spare

The bard, who love and beauty makes his care;

I here commend him—take him to your favour,

And I'll be surety for his good behaviour.

FINIS.



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